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NEWS RELEASE

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Increasing Number of R.I. Students Take AP, PSAT Exams

An increasing number of public-school students in Rhode Island took AP exams last year, according to a report released today (Feb. 6th) by the College Board, which administers the AP Program and the AP exams.

In the 2005-06 school year, 1,982 Rhode Island students took AP exams, a 7.9-percent increase from the previous year.

Of those students, 1,811 scored 3 or higher, an increase of 10.1 percent from the previous year. The College Board says that a score of 3 (out of 5) or better is a good predictor of success in college.

Within the graduating class of 2006, 13 percent took an AP exam and 8.4 percent scored 3 or better on an AP exam.

“These improved test scores, as well as the increased number of students who are taking the AP exams, demonstrate that we are moving forward in improving academic performance in our schools,” said Governor Donald L. Carcieri. “Our challenge is to stay the course and continue to provide the necessary support to further our students’ progress. We are doing that with strong investments in professional development, math and science specialists, and a statewide curriculum.”

“This increase in our AP participation rate, along with the strong participation by Rhode Island students in dual-enrollment programs that link high schools with post-secondary courses, show that we are helping our students prepare for success in college,” said James A. DiPrete, Chairman of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education.

“I am glad to see this improvement in AP participation and AP scores,” said Peter McWalters, Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education. “One of the keys to success in college is access to a rigorous high-school curriculum, so it is encouraging that more of our students are rising to the challenge of the AP Program.”

Participation in the AP Program among low-income students has improved – 52 low-income test-takers in 2005 to 137 in 2006 – but still remains low. To improve participation, the U.S. Department of Education has awarded the R.I. Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE) a grant to pay the full cost of test fees for needy students. About \$40,000 in grant money is available.

In addition, to increase participation on the College Board PSAT, RIDE pays the full test fee for all students (sophomores and juniors) in districts that require participation. Last year, 9,391 juniors (up from 7,437) and 9,862 sophomores (up from 4,956) took the PSAT. The College Board believes that participation on the PSAT improves the score on the SAT exam, which can be a factor in college admissions.